SIATRAS NUMISMATIC STUDIES, 2

Jean N. Svoronos

THE MYRON HOARD / 1914

IGCH 62

Edited, translated into English and published by Demetrius Siatras

ATHENS 2019

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SIATRAS SERIES OF NUMISMATIC STUDIES, No. 2

Jean N. Svoronos (1863-1922)

The Myron Hoard /1914 – *IGCH 62*

Translated into English from the Greek original by Demetrius Siatras

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INTRODUCTION

The Numismatic Museum of Athens was recently enriched with the probably biggest and perhaps the most important numismatic treasure ever found in Greece.

On May 20th, 1914, a group of five masons and tile-makers were digging clay soil to make bricks in the site called Lákkoi Sophoulē, about 200 metres beyond the village *Myros** of the Karditsa Prefecture, Thessaly, in an area that was a property of the Greek State. While digging with hoes, they found an almost destroyed ceramic pot containing — according to the first telegram of the Karditsa magistrate to the Ministry of the Religious Affairs at Athens on May 24th, 1914, — 1,647 silver coins, bearing impressions, portraits and animal images; the hoard was delivered to the Mayor and the school-teacher of the village and then to the Police Station at Karditsa.

The local police officer, in his report of May 22nd, writes that the pot:

> " . . . contained coins; the workers that found it were ignorant of its value, therefore many of these coins were given to the children of the village that were playing around at the time of unearthing, then the whole thing was put into a bag and delivered to the Mayor and the school-teacher of the Myron Community; a few coins at the hands of the children were collected by a police officer and then also delivered to our station, *i.e.* 1,586 ancient coins, as follows:[1]

(*) [See N. Georgiades, *Thessalia,* Athenae 1880. Georgiades registers the village as *Myros*, locally called Myro(n). Today, the official name is *Myrina* (since 1958). We keep the old name *Myron* by which the hoard is widely known and registered in the international inventories of hoards.]

[1] An antique dealer that happened to be in the area has written the attribution and the description [of the coins] in the police report.

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1. Nine hundred forty three (943) silver coins of Thebes; staters bearing on the obverse the Thebaic shield and on the reverse an amphora with various symbols.
2. One hundred eighty six (186) silver coins, staters of Sicyōn. On the obverse, a laurel (*read* laurel wreath) surrounding a swallow (read pigeon); on the reverse, a lion (*read* Chimaera).
3. Two hundred twenty one (221) silver coins, staters of Aegina. On the obverse, a walking tortoise; on the reverse, an incuse square divided into four parts.
4. One hundred eleven (111) similar coins, staters of Aegina. On the obverse a scaly *(sic)* tortoise eating grass; on the reverse, an incuse square divided into five parts.
5. Seventy two (72) similar staters of Thebes. On the obverse the Thebaic shield and on the reverse Dionysus head to the right, except one with Dionysus looking straight.
6. Fifteen (15) silver coins, staters of Thebes. On the obverse the Thebaic shield. On the reverse Hercules devouring (*read* strangling) two snakes.
7. Three (3) silver coins of Thebes. On the obverse the Thebaic shield and on the reverse Hercules throwing an arrow.
8. Another two (2) coins of Thebes. On the obverse, the Thebaic shield; on the reverse, Diana (read Minerva) looking in a mirror.
9. One (1) silver coin, also of Thebes. On the obverse, the Thebaic shield; on the reverse, a galloping horse.
10. One (1) silver coin of Argos. On the obverse crowned bride's head (read crowned goddess Hera) and on the reverse dolphins.
11. Four (4) silver coins of Tanagra. Thebaic shield on the obverse; on the reverse, half horse outgoing *(sic)* within an incuse square.
12. Twenty one (21) silver coins of Thebes. Thebaic shield on the obverse; on the reverse, a square incuse divided into four parts and in the middle the letter Θ.
13. Six (6) silver drachmas of Thebes. Thebaic shield on the obverse; on the reverse, a square incuse divided into four parts,

i.e. one thousand five hundred eighty six (1,586) coins."

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b. In § 2: 188 coins of Sicyōn: six of them are drachmas of the same state and one coin is a Thebaic didrachm of amphora type.

c. In § 3: 221 coins of Aegina: two are drachmas (not didrachms) of Aegina; three are Thebaic didrachms of common types and two are Thebaic drachmas.

d. In § 4: 111 staters of Aegina: some of them are of the most ancient type.

e. In § 5: 72 staters of Thebes with Dionysus' head: two with Hercules' (not Dionysus') head, in fact one facing and one to the right (both rare).

f. In § 6: fifteen coins: one is of the type of Hercules shooting a bow.

g. In § 7: three coins: Hercules shooting a bow; Hercules standing and fighting with his club; and Poseidon with trident of the Haliartus type (all three are rare, but in medium condition).

h. In § 9: the coin belongs to Orchomenus, not to Thebes.

i. In § 12: twenty one coins of "*Thebes*": one of them, bearing a wheel on the reverse side, seems to belong to the Alliance of Thebes (*read* Tanagra) with Chalcis.

Beyond the above, three didrachms not registered in the protocol but also belonging to the same hoard were delivered, *i.e.* two Boeotic and one of Sicyōn.

The attribution and description differences were greatly increased and many rare coins emerged when — in the Numismatic Museum of Athens — we cleaned the coins and removed the thick layer of oxidation that covered their types.

We have already published a geographical and chronological synopsis of this great find in the *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 1915, Vol. I (4), p. 87; it is also reprinted here [next page, *Table I*]. The synopsis as well as the *Catalogue* that follow are conformed with the three consecutive works of the famous Barclay V. Head:

— *On the Chronological Sequence of the Coins of Boeotia*, London 1881.

Tabular survey of the Myron hoard.

	I 600-550 BC	II 550-480 BC	III 480-457 BC	IV 456-446 BC	V 446-426 BC	VI 426-395 BC	VII 395-387 BC	VIII 382-374 BC	IX 374-338 BC	X 338-315 BC
BOEOTIA:	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ΑΛΙΑΡΤΟΣ	—	1–4	—	—	—	—	—	5–6	—	—
ΟΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΣ	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7–19	—	—
ΘΗΒΑΙ (*and* ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΒΟΙΩΤΩΝ)	20	21–37	38	39–44	45–53	54–274	275–463	—	464–986	987–1063
ΤΑΝΑΓΡΑ	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ΦΑΡΑΙ	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

	I 700-550 BC	II 550-480 BC	III 480-431 BC
AEGINA	1079–1177	1178–1295	1296–1404

PELOPONNESE:						421-400 BC				
ΑΡΓΟΣ	—	—	—	—	—	1405	—	—	—	—
ΣΙΚΥΩΝ	—	—	—	—	—	1406–1596	—	—	—	—

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ΟΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΣ
ORCHOMENUS

Period VIII: 387 – 374 BC

[7] 11.13 mm. — Boeotian shield.
Ω ΕΡΧΟ below. In the centre, a ***horse*** galloping to the right; above it ***corn-wreath***, below it [ΕΥ]ΔΩ[ΡΟ]. Incuse peripheral field.
Fair condition (Διατήρησις μετριωτάτη).
Plate I, 5.

[8] 10.95 mm. — Boeotian shield.
Ω Ε — Ρ ***Amphora ornate*** on its upper half. Incuse peripheral field.
Fine condition.
Plate I, 6.

[9] 11.83 mm. — Id. In the centre, a circular countermark: Ε.
Ω ΕΡ — ΧΟ ***Amphora*** similar to the previous one, above which ΕΥΦΟ; corn-wreath to the left.
Extra fine condition.
Plate I, 7.

[10] 11.78 mm. — Id., without countermark. Ω Id.
Good condition.

[11] 11.28 mm. — Id. Ω Id.
Poor condition (Διατήρησις κακή).

[12] 11.64 mm. — Id.
Ω Id., but with the corn-wreath to the right.
Fine condition.
Plate I, 8.

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[46] 11.31 mm. — Id.

Ω ΘΕΒΑ — ΙΟϟ upper right. ***Hercules adolescent***, unbearded, ***kneeling*** to the right, holding between his thighs and ***stringing his bow***. A club in front of him. The whole within an incuse square.

Good condition.

Plate II, 27.

[47] 10.74 mm. — Id. Ω Id.

Poor condition.

[48] 11.52 mm. — Id.

Ω [Θ]ΕΒΑ[ΙΟϟ] above. **Infant Hercules on his knees, strangling the two serpents**. The serpent in his right hand is already dead, so he releases its neck and uses this hand for help. The whole within an incuse square.

Good condition.

Plate II, 28.

[49] 10.54 mm. — Id. Ω Id.

Poor condition.

[50] 11.72 mm. — Id. Small unclear countermark on the shield.

Ω ΘΕΒΑΙΟ[ϟ]. Id., but in the field, above Hercules, a ***giant leaf of ivy***.

Fair condition.

Plate III, 29.

[51] 10.94 mm. — Id., but with a notch.

Ω ΘΕΒΑΙΟϟ. A bearded man wearing a short sleeveless tunic without wrinkles, running or kneeling to the right, looking back and fighting with a cane that holds high in his right hand ***(Dionysus? Pentheus?)*** The whole within an incuse square. *Cf.* Hirsch, *Auktions - Katalog*. XIII, Table XXII, No. 1790.

Poor condition.

Plate III, 30.

[52] 11.98 mm. — Similar shield.

Ω ⊙ΕΒ[Α]. L. ***goddess (Athena ?)***, sitting on a throne with footstool to the left and holding the ***helmet*** in her left hand**.** The whole within an incuse square, but goddess' head and helmet off-die. = *BMC, Central Greece*, Pl. 12, 10.

Fine condition.

Plate III, 31.

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ΤΑΝΑΓΡΑ
TANAGRA

Period I: 600 – 550 BC

[1064] 5.52 mm. — ***Boeotian shield*** bearing laterally ⊣ and ⊢.

Ω ***Incuse square*** of mill-sail pattern, divided into eight triangular wings to the left, of which four are incuse.

Fine condition.

Plate XIV, 171.

[1065] 5.03 mm. — Id. Ω Id., but the wings to the right.

Fine condition.

Plate XIV, 172.

[1066] 5.17 mm. — Id. Ω Id.

Fine condition.

Plate XIV, 173.

Period II: 550 – 480 BC

[1067] 5.67 mm. — Id. To the right ⊣.

Ω Similar square; its four relief compartments form a cross resting on the straight lines; the remaining four incuse compartments occupy the corners of the square. The letters T and T in two of these compartments.

Extra fine condition.

Plate XIV, 174.

[1068] 5.45 mm. — Id. Ω Id.

Extra fine condition.

Plate XIV, 175.

[1069] 5.72 mm. — Id. Ω Id., but different (older) square.

Fine condition.

Plate XIV, 176.

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PLATE VI